

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 8054

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, JS

SUBJ: SOHYO ICFTU AFFILIATE GROUP DESIRES TO MEET WITH AFL-CIO

SUMMARY: ZENTEI (SOHYO'S POSTAL UNION) OFFICIAL ASKED ASST LABATT TO DETERMINE IF 18-MEMBER SOHYO ICFTU AFFILIATE TEAM WILL BE WELCOME TO VISIT AFL-CIO UNIONS, INCLUDING AFL-CIO HQ, WHILE TRAVELING THROUGH US ON WAY TO OCTOBER ICFTU MEXICO CITY MEETING AND ON RETURN. EMBASSY DESIRES REPLY TO THIS OVERTURE BY JUNE 30. END SUMMARY.

1. ZENTEI (JAPAN POSTAL WORKERS' UNION; 205,000 MEMBERS; SOHYO, ICFTU AND PTTI AFFILIATE) DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEPT SADAU KUROSAWA MET WITH ASST LABATT ON JUNE 13. KUROSAWA SAID HE WILL LEAD 18-MEMBER SOHYO ICFTU AFFILIATE TEAM TO OCTOBER 16-25 ICFTU MEXICO CITY MEETING. TEAM PLANS TO STOP IN EITHER NEW YORK OR WASHINGTON OCTOBER 14-15 ON WAY TO MEXICO VIA EUROPE AND IN SAN FRANCISCO OCTOBER 26-27 ON WAY BACK TO JAPAN.

2. TEAM WILL CONSIST OF TEN ZENTEI MEMBERS, ONE OR MORE MEMBERS FROM EACH OF FOUR OTHER SOHYO ICFTU AFFILIATES (TANRO COAL MINERS; TOSHIKOTSU-MUNICIPAL TRANSPORT; NIPPORO-BROADCASTING; AND ZENKO-METAL MINING), AND ONE OR MORE OBSERVERS FROM SOHYO HEADQUARTERS. THOUGH KUROSAWA DID NOT IDENTIFY SOHYO OBSERVERS, ASST LABATT BELIEVES IT IS LIKELY THAT SOHYO PLANNING BUREAU DIRECTOR IN CHARGE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, NORISHISA ARAI, IS LIKELY TO GO. ARIA FORMERLY HELD KURO-CONFIDENTIAL

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SAWA'S POSITION IN ZENTEI AND JOINED SOHYO HQ IN 1974. LIKE KUROSAWA, ARAI BELIEVES SOHYO SHOULD EXPAND TIES WITH NON-COMMUNIST BLOCK NATIONAL LABOR CENTERS, PARTICULARLY SOUTH-EAST ASIA.

3. KUROSAWA ASKED EMBASSY TO FACILITATE MEETINGS WITH AFL-CIO UNIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS. HE ASKED EMBASSY TO INQUIRE "INFORMALLY" THRU DEPT WHETHER AFL-CIO HEADQUARTERS WOULD WELCOME VISIT TO HQ BY HIS GROUP. HE WILL CONFER WITH MEMBERS OF TEAM ON HIS RETURN FROM OSLO PTTI MEETING AT END OF JUNE AND HOPES EMBASSY CAN REPLY BY THEN.

4. COMMENT. ZENTEI IS LARGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT OF SOHYO ICFTU AFFILIATES. THROUGH ZENTEI'S INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION IS DIFFICULT, LEADERS ARE INTENT ON EXPANDING INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS TO NON-COMMUNIST TO NATINAL LABOR CENTERS. KUROSAWA AND ARAI BOTH HAVE SPOKEN TO ASST LABATT ABOUT BUREAUCRATIC, NON-REPRESENTATIVE, STAKHANOVITE CHARACTER OF FREQUENTLY VISITED USSR UNIONS, BUT THEY SEE SOME PROMISE IN EASTERN EUROPE AND YOGOSLAVIA. HOWEVER, DESPITE CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL DISTASTE FOR SOVIET UNIONS, NEITHER HAVE INCLINATION NOR DIRECT POWER TO REDUCE SUBSTANTIAL SOHYO-SOVIET EXCHANGE PROGRAM. INSTEAD, THEY ARE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO EXPAND CONTACTS TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN AND WESTERN EUROPEAN ICFTU UNIONS AND THE US. KUROSAWA IS PARTICULARLY INQUISITIVE ABOUT AFL-CIO'S INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

4. ACTION REQUESTED. DESPITE SHORT STAY ENVISIONED FOR NEW YORK OR WASHINGTON, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS DEPT ASK AFL-CIO HQ TO MEET THIS GROUP. WHETHER OR NOT MEETING WITH AFL-CIO HQ IS FEASIBLE, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS SOHYO ICFTU AFFILIATE GROUP BE INVITED TO VISIT AAFLI IN WASHINGTON OR AFL-CIO'S AFRICAN INSTITUTE IN NEW YORK. THEY MIGHT ALSO PROFIT FROM CHANCE TO SEE AFL-CIO LABOR STUDIES CENTER IN ACTION. (DUE TO TEAM'S SIZE IT MIGHT BE DIVIDED UP FOR VISITS TO APPROPRIATE COUNTERPART UNIONS AND OTHER LABOR ORGANIZATIONS AS SUGGESTED ABOVE). ALSO, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE IN SAN FRANCISCO. REQUEST REPLY BY JUNE 30.
HODGSON

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